

Message Text

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SUBJ: MINORITY DISCRIMINATION IN ROMANIA

1. EMBASSY REVIEWED DOCUMENT PREPARED BY COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN ROMANIA CONCERNING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HUNGARIAN MINORITY IN ROMANIA AND 1976 EMBASSY REPORT ON SUBJECT. AT OUTSET WISH TO STRESS WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT IN U.S. INTEREST TO BE SEEN DEFENDING ROMANIAN PERFORMANCE IN THIS AREA. THIS IS BETTER LEFT TO GOR, SHOULD IT DESIRE TO DO SO. NOR DO WE BELIEVE THERE IS MUCH MERIT IN AN ATTEMPT TO REBUT EACH AND EVERY CRITICISM MADE OF EMBASSY STUDY. THAT SAID, IT CERTAINLY IS NOT IN OUR INTEREST TO ALLOW AN EXAGGERATED AND POLEMICAL PRESENTATION OF THE SITUATION (WHICH THE COMMITTEE'S DOCUMENT MOST ASSUREDLY IS) TO STAND WITHOUT CORRECTION OR COMMENT. THIS IS PARTICULARLY SO IF THE COMMITTEE INTENDS TO PROPAGATE ITS VERSION DURING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ON MFN. IN SPITE OF ITS DISCLAIMERS, THE COMMITTEE DOCUMENT CLEARLY SERVES TO SUPPORT HUNGARIAN CLAIMS TO TRANSYLVANIA AND SHOWS NO INTEREST IN ANYONE OTHER THAN THE HUNGARIAN POPULATION.

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2. THUS IN NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS WE WILL UP-DATE AND ELABORATE ON KEY ELEMENTS OF PREVIOUS EMBASSY REPORT. AMBASSADOR HAS ALREADY ASKED AND RECEIVED FROM FONMIN ASSURANCES OF FURTHER ASSISTANCE FROM GOR INTERMS OF ACCESS TO OFFICIALS AND DATA. WE OF COURSE ARE NOT SURE THAT THIS WILL BE FORTHCOMING IN SPITE OF ASSURANCES, NOR ARE WE PREPARED TO ACCEPT ALL GOR DATA OR INFORMATION

AT FACE VALUE. WE ALSO PLAN SOME FURTHER TRAVEL IN TRANSYLVANIA. WE WOULD HOPE TO HAVE AN UP-DATED STUDY READY BY FIRST HALF OF JULY PRIOR TO CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION OF MFN RENEWAL.

3. AS WE TRUST DEPARTMENT AWARE (OBVIOUSLY COMMITTEE WAS NOT), ORIGINAL EMBASSY STUDY IN NO WAY PURPORTED TO BE AN EXHAUSTIVE, HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE PROBLEMS OF DISCRIMINATION IN TRANSYLVANIA. IT WAS ADDRESSED FIRST AND FOREMOST TO A SERIES OF THEN CURRENT AND RATHER SPECIFIC CONGRESSIONAL CONCERNS RELATING TO THE SUBJECT. IT DID NOT, FOR EXAMPLE, DISCUSS THE MERGER OF THE BABES-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY WITH ITS ROMANIAN COUNTERPART IN CLUJ (P. 15 OF COMMITTEE'S REPORT) BECAUSE THIS WAS DONE IN 1959 UNDER A DIFFERENT REGIME WHICH WAS PURSUING A MUCH MORE AGGRESSIVE ASSIMILATION POLICY WITH REGARD TO MINORITIES. LIKEWISE, EMBASSY STUDY DID NOT DEAL WITH THE SITUATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION FOR MINORITIES AND DECREE 278 (P. 3 OF COMMITTEE STUDY) SINCE THIS PROBLEM HAD NOT BEEN RAISED AT THAT TIME, ALTHOUGH IT HAS BEEN SUBSEQUENTLY. EMBASSY'S A19 OF FEBRUARY 17, 1977 REPORTS THE LATEST INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THIS SUBJECT. IT ALSO NOTES EXISTENCE OF A GREAT NUMBER OF EXCEPTIONS TO PROVISIONS OF THE DECREE, A FACT WHICH THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT IGNORES.

4. THE EXAGGERATED LANGUAGE OF THE COMMITTEE'S STUDY, AS WELL AS MANY OF ITS MORE GENERAL ALLEGATIONS, REFLECT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ITS ESSENTIALLY POLEMICAL NATURE, E.G.:

---THE STATEMENT THAT "CHURCH OFFICIALS IN ROMANIA ARE EITHER POLICE INFORMERS...OR TOTALLY INTIMIDATED INDIVIDUALS" (PAGE 6). TO BE EFFECTIVE IN ROMANIA A RELIGIOUS LEADER MUST BOTH HOLD AND REPRESENT HIS CONGREGATION AND ALSO BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH THE REGIME. SOME ACHIEVE THIS DIFFICULT MIX BETTER THAN OTHERS. HOWEVER, IT IS PATENTLY FALSE TO APPLY SUCH CHARACTERIZATION TO SOMEONE SUCH AS ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP ALBA IULIA, ARON MARTIN, A HUNGARIAN WHO HAS SPENT MUCH OF HIS LIFE IN PRISON OR UNDER HOUSE ARREST BECAUSE OF HIS BELIEFS, OR TO LUTHERAN BISHOP ALBERT KLEIN, PERHAPS THE MOST ABLE DEFENDER OF THE SAXON MINORITY IN ROMANIA.

---THE STATEMENT THAT THE THEORY OF CONTINUITY OF ROMANIAN PRESENCE IN TRANSYLVANIA "HAS NO CREDENCE WITH ANY SERIOUS NON-ROMANIAN SCHOLAR" (PAGE 25). THE THEORY IS IN FACT UPHELD BY THE NOTED ENGLISH HISTORIAN R.W. SETON-WATSON IN HIS AUTHORITATIVE "HISTORY OF THE ROMANIANS";

---THE ALLEGATION THAT THE REAL PURPOSE BEHIND A WHOLE SERIES OF RECENT LAWS ON A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS (CULTURAL PATRIMONY, TOURIST LODGINGS AND MONETARY EXCHANGE, ASSIGNMENT OF JOBS, ELEMENTARY EDUCATION, RESTRICTION ON PAPER SUPPLIES, ETC.) HAS BEEN DICTATED ALMOST SOLELY BY MOTIVES OF MINORITY DISCRIMINATION. SURELY IF THIS WERE THE REAL INTENT A BETTER METHOD MIGHT HAVE BEEN FOUND. PAST ROMANIAN POLICY IN THIS AREA HAS NOT BEEN NOTED FOR ITS SUBLETY.

---ALSO, WHILE STATISTICS, PARTICULARLY ROMANIAN ONES, CAN BE AND OFTEN ARE DECEPTIVE, THE COMMITTEE'S CLAIMED 2.5 MILLION HUNGARIAN POPULATION FIGURE (PAGE 2), APPARENTLY EXTRAPPLATED FROM PRE-COMMUNIST GROWTH RATES, IS MISLEADING. WE ALSO BELIVE THE 1.6 MILLION ROMANIAN FIGURE TO BE AN UNDERSTATEMENT. HOWEVER, THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE RELATIVE POSITION OF THE TRANSYLVANIAN MINORITIES HAS DETERIORATED SINCE 1944 DUE TO A VARIETY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF ACTORS, E.G. DIFFERENTIAL MIGRATION, LOWER MINORITY GROWTH RATES AS COMPARED TO ROMANIAN POPULATION, ASSIMILATION AND CENSUS UNDERESTIMATION.

5. COMMENT: WE REMAIN MOST RELUCTANT TO OCCUPY THE MIDDLE GROUND BETWEEN THE GOR'S CONTENTION THAT ALL IS WELL AND THE EQUALLY FIRM CONVICTION OF HUNGARIAN EXILE GROUPS THAT TRANSYLVANIAN (READ HUNGARIAN) MINORITIES ARE IN DANGER. NEITHER OUR RESOURCES NOR OUR PRIORITIES ARE SUCH THAT WE CAN COMPETE WITH THE GOR OR A DEDICATED POLEMICALLY INCLINED ORGANIZATION. IT IS BOUND TO BE A NO-WIN GAME, AS THE COMMITTEE'S OWN STUDY SO WELL ILLUSTRATES, INVOLVING AS IT DOES CENTURIES OF MUTUAL ANTAGONISM. NEVERTHELESS, THE COMMITTEE'S DOCUMENT DOES PROVIDE US WITH A WEALTH OF MATERIAL WITH WHICH TO CHALLENGE ROMANIAN ASSERTIONS, AND PERHAPS OUT OF THAT WILL EMERGE A MORE OBJECTIVE PORTRAIT OF CURRENT SITUATION. VIETS

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